

THE BEACON



A PAPER FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL
AND THE HOME



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DICKENS' HOME AT GADSHILL, ENGLAND.
(THE PLACE HE COVETED AS A BOY AND PURCHASED IN 1856.)

Charles Dickens.

FEB. 7, 1812-JUNE 6, 1870.

On February 7, a hundred years ago, was born Charles Dickens, one of the greatest story-writers that ever lived. He loved people and he loved children: he told of them in their sorrow and in their joy. His writings are always wholesome. He did much to improve the conditions of life for others and to inspire them to trust steadfastly in the right. The children in his books are famous; no one should pass through life without knowing of Tiny Tim, of Little Nell, of Paul Dombey, of poor Joe who had no other name, and of young David Copperfield. That all the readers of *The Beacon* may know something of the writings of

Dickens, we publish one of the most famous of his short stories.

A CHILD'S DREAM OF A STAR.

There was once a child, and he strolled about a good deal, and thought of a number of things. He had a sister, who was a child, too, and his constant companion. These two used to wonder all day long. They wondered at the beauty of the flowers; they wondered at the height and blueness of the sky; they wondered at the depth of the bright water; they wondered at the goodness and the power of God who made the lovely world.

They used to say to one another, sometimes, Supposing all the children upon earth were to die, would the flowers and the water

and the sky be sorry? They believed they would be sorry. For, said they, the buds are the children of the flowers, and the little playful streams that gambol down the hill-sides are the children of the water; and the smallest bright specks playing at hide-and-seek in the sky at night must surely be the children of the stars; and they would all be grieved to see their playmates, the children of men, no more.

There was one clear shining star that used to come out in the sky before the rest, near the church-spire, above the graves. It was larger and more beautiful, they thought, than all the others, and every night they watched for it, standing hand in hand at the window. Whoever saw it first cried out, "I see the star!" And often they cried out

both together, knowing so well when it would rise, and where. So they grew to be such friends with it that before lying down in their beds they always looked out once again, to bid it good-night; and, when they were turning round to sleep, they used to say, "God bless the star!"

But while she was still very young, oh, very, very young, the sister drooped, and came to be so weak that she could no longer stand in the window at night; and then the child looked sadly out by himself, and, when he saw the star, turned round and said to the patient pale face on the bed, "I see the star!" and then a smile would come upon the face, and a little weak voice used to say, "God bless my brother and the star!"

And so the time came, all too soon! when the child looked out alone, and when there was no face on the bed; and when there was a little grave among the graves, not there before; and when the star made long rays down toward him, as he saw it through his tears.

Now, these rays were so bright, and they seemed to make such a shining way from earth to heaven, that, when the child went to his solitary bed, he dreamed about the star; and dreamed that, lying where he was, he saw a train of people taken up that sparkling road by angels. And the star, opening, showed him a great world of light, where many more such angels waited to receive them.

All these angels who were waiting turned their beaming eyes upon the people who were carried up into the star; and some came out from the long rows in which they stood, and fell upon the people's necks, and kissed them tenderly, and went away with them down avenues of light, and were so happy in their company that, lying in his bed, he wept for joy.

But there were many angels who did not go with them, and among them one he knew. The patient face that once had lain upon the bed was glorified and radiant, but his heart found out his sister among all the host.

His sister's angel lingered near the entrance of the star, and said to the leader among those who had brought the people thither:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said, "No."

She was turning hopefully away, when the child stretched out his arms and cried, "O, sister, I am here! Take me!" And then she turned her beaming eyes upon him and it was night, and the star was shining into the room, making long rays down towards him as he saw it through his tears.

From that hour forth the child looked out upon the star as on the home he was to go to, when his time should come; and he thought that he did not belong to the earth alone, but to the star too, because of his sister's angel gone before.

There was a baby born to be a brother to the child; and, while he was so little that he never yet had spoken a word, he stretched his tiny form out on his bed and died.

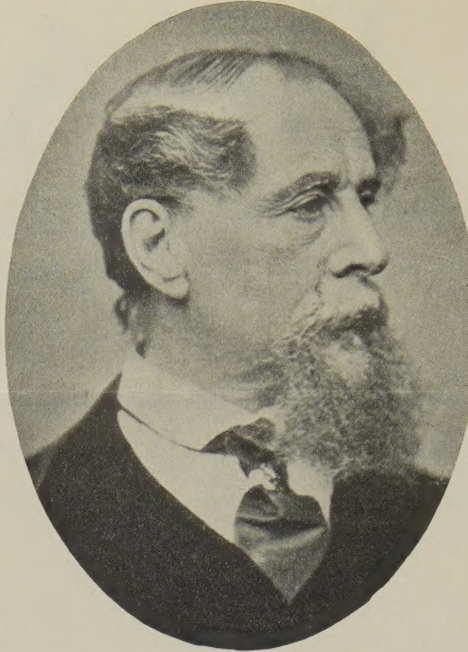
Again the child dreamed of the opened star, and of the company of angels, and the train of people, and the rows of angels with their beaming eyes all turned upon those people's faces.

Said his sister's angel to the leader:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Not that one, but another."

As the child beheld his brother's angel in her arms, he cried, "O, sister, I am here! Take me!" And she turned and smiled upon him, and the star was shining.



CHARLES DICKENS.

He grew to be a young man, and was busy at his books when an old servant came to him and said:

"Thy mother is no more. I bring her blessing on her darling son!"

Again at night he saw the star, and all that former company. Said his sister's angel to the leader:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Thy mother!"

A mighty cry of joy went forth through all the star, because the mother was reunited to her two children. And he stretched out his arms and cried: "O mother, sister, and brother, I am here! Take me!" And they answered him, "Not yet." And the star was shining.

He grew to be a man whose hair was turning gray, and he was sitting in his chair by the fireside, heavy with grief, and with his face bedewed with tears, when the star opened once again.

Said his sister's angel to the leader, "Is my brother come?"

And he said, "Nay, but his maiden daughter."

And the man who had been the child saw his daughter, newly lost to him, a celestial creature among those three, and he said: "My daughter's head is on my sister's bosom, and her arm is round my mother's neck, and at her feet there is the baby of old time, and I can bear the parting from her. God be praised!"

And the star was shining.

Thus the child came to be an old man, and his once smooth face was wrinkled, and his steps were slow and feeble, and from his bed, his children standing round, he cried, as he had cried so long ago:

"I see the star!"

They whispered one to another, "He is dying."

And he said: "I am. My age is falling from me like a garment, and I move towards the star as a child. And, oh, my Father, now I thank thee that it has so often opened, to receive those dear ones who await me!"

And the star was shining; and it shines upon his grave.

Imagination rules the world. NAPOLEON.

Adrift on an Ice-floe.

BY JESSE RAMSDELL.

Chapter III.

"Run!" cried Frank, grasping the gaff and rifle from the bottom of the boat, and turning.

But Harry did not run. Why? His very life seemed to depend upon his getting away from the punt in the shortest possible time, but in the punt—was that seal! He was a strong boy, as are most boys of the rugged Newfoundland coast: he was small, though. But so was the seal. The seal was slippery, too. Yet—

He managed to stagger away from the punt with the seal in his arms. The storm blinded him so that he had no idea where he was going. Frank had gone before, and was awaiting him—where? He did not know, his sense of direction was gone, too. Yet he held on to the seal. It was slippery,— "slippery as butter!" his Dad had said. He had meant it in a different way, but Harry thought of the words—and took a fresh hold on the seal!

"B'y! Harry, b'y!"

It was Frank's voice, three yards away. A moment later Harry staggered against him in the blinding storm, slipped, and fell.

"Harry!" cried Frank, helping him to his feet. "Why, b'y, where did you go? Where?"— He saw the seal at his feet, and paused, a strange look passing over his face. His hand fell with an unusual gentleness on the smaller boy's shoulder.

"Harry!" he said. His hand tightened a little on the other's shoulder. He said no more, but Harry understood.

After a moment, "We're needing shelter, b'y."

"The boat?"

"It's gone by this time. The ice's closed in." He knew more than that. The great ice-floe was slowly drifting out to sea. Their case seemed hopeless; but he would not tell Harry, or let him know by any act.

Night was coming. Now they could see for twelve feet about them; but, when the darkness came, nothing would be visible.

"Let's make for the hummock of ice," said Frank. "It'll shelter us a bit."

"You take the seal, Frank," said Harry.

"Ay."

Reaching the hummock of ice, they sat down in its shelter. The wind whirled the snow on either side, and the oncoming night brought more cold with it. They sat in silence shivering.

"Are you sure the punt was nipped?" Harry asked presently. "Maybe it wasn't. We could get behind it, and we wouldn't be so cold. I'm shivering awful. Let's see if the punt was nipped."

"Better not," said Frank, shaking his head slowly. "It's dangerous walking, lad, over the ice in this storm."

"We'd have firewood," said Harry. "The punt'd last till morning, Frank. Fire! Think of it!"

"True," responded Frank, and considered. It was attractive, the thought of warmth and comparative comfort. He rose to his feet, taking the gaff.

"You wait here," he said. "I'm thinking the punt was nipped, but there's a chance. I'll see."

"Not alone," protested Harry, rising.

"Follow close, then."

With Harry at his heels, he started through the storm. With his gaff before him, he

struck at the ice, then raised it and placed his foot on the tested spot.

But Harry was tired. And now he unconsciously lagged behind.

There came a startled cry suddenly, and Frank turned. His gaff dropped from his hand. Harry was sinking through the ice!

As quickly as Frank had dropped the gaff, he stooped and picked it up again. Then he ran toward Harry.

The smaller boy had instinctively thrown out both arms as he felt the ice give way beneath him, and now he stuck in the hole, submerged to the waist. The shock had taken nearly all his strength, and for a moment he was motionless.

"Here! Grasp the gaff. No, never mind. The ice is solid about you."

Frank placed his hands beneath the other's arms and began to raise him from the treacherous hole.

"Heave away, now!" he cried. "Up you come."

And up Harry did come, a wet, miserable, shivering boy.

"'Twas my fault," he sobbed. "I fell behind, and didn't take your steps."

"Pooh! Pish! 'Tis glad I am 'twas so small a hole. But now to find the punt and start a blaze to thaw you out. Follow the leader close, b'y!"

Laughing to cover his dismay at this new disaster, Frank once more headed for the punt. Harry felt his clothes freezing to him. He was cold, oh, so cold! What if they did not find the punt?

"The punt!" cried Frank suddenly in a voice new with hope.

They rushed upon it joyously, yet, upon reaching it Frank paused, and Harry, coming up, saw why. They eyed the boat, then their eyes met.

It was not their punt, but an old hulk, frozen in the ice.

"Not ours," said Frank. "An old, abandoned thing. But good firewood at that. We could get the upper half of it if we had the axe that's in our own."

"Can't you start it as she lays?" pleaded the shivering Harry.

"Not in this wind and snow. Take off your clothes, b'y, and wring them out. The wind'll sting you, and wake you up. Stay here and do it. I'm off to find the 'Yukon.' If she was nipped and splintered, maybe I can find the axe in the snow."

Left alone, Harry struggled out of his frosty jacket, and wrung it as dry as he could. Then he treated his shirt and trousers the same way, and with chattering teeth proceeded to don the clothes.

A shout from the direction which Frank had taken caused him to spring to his feet. But it was a cry of joy. He shouted that Frank might know where he was, and almost instantly Frank came from the midst of the storm. In his hand was the axe.

"But this ain't all," he cried, his face aglow. "What do you think, b'y? The punt's as solid as a rock on the top of the ice. 'Tis a miracle, indeed. How and why I don't know, but there it is, snug as can be. I near stared my eyes out my head when I saw her."

He began to knock the old hulk to bits, and presently started a blaze. Soon it was burning brightly. Harry crept as near as possible, and stretched his limbs toward the fire.

When the blood began to warm in his veins, he felt like another boy.

"This is something like," he murmured

contentedly. "We're going to come out all right after all. It's wonderful about the 'Yukon.' I s'pose the water lifted her up on the floe just before the crash came."

"Ay."

"We can stay on the floe till morning, and then walk ashore. Unless," he added, "we're drifting out instead of in."

"Ay, unless we're drifting out," repeated Frank.

(To be continued.)

You cannot run away from a weakness, you must some time fight it out or perish; and, if that be so, why not now, and where you stand?

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

For The Beacon.

Valentine's Day at "The Home."

BY S. VIRGINIA LEVIS.

Ever since Beth had been permitted that single visit to the South-western Home for Destitute Children, she had indulged in protracted spells of thoughtfulness. Her brown studies elicited frequent comments from the other girls. "What's it about now?—same thing?" inquired Alma Dornan.

"Same subject,—those destitute children," confirmed Beth.

"But they're not destitute now," consoled Alma.

"No, but holidays mean so little to them, the Home sees mostly bad times. But I was thinking how very happy I was once over a valentine—the first I had ever received"; and Beth's memory went back to the years when her parents were struggling with misfortune. She recalled how her mother, always devising some little happiness for her loved ones, had resurrected an old valentine received in her girlhood; how, in a disguised hand, she had written, "For Miss Beth Canby," and pasted a cancelled stamp on the envelope; and how her father had played postman. The delight lingered yet.

"No, girls," Beth went on, "twenty-six valentines—even cheap ones—would cramp us considerably on pocket-money, but I've about half thought out a plan which will cost nothing but a little skill and time—besides envelopes," she added. "Valentine's Day is less than a week off."

"So we're to manufacture valentines, is that it? But out of what?"

"Can't you come around, all four of you, Saturday, and bring some picture post-cards? I don't mean new ones. And I'll hunt up a few of the gayest I can find."

The dining-room table that Saturday afternoon presented a motley collection of cards, paste, scissors, and other accessories, among them a bunch of pink and blue ribbons donated by Mrs. Beeber. Mrs. Beeber sold dry goods and notions, and the discarded ribbons were from around handkerchiefs and the like.

"First of all we must have patterns," explained Beth. "Here, Amanda Sears, double up this paper and cut out a heart: you're good at such things." And soon other simple shapes were added,—stars, discs, and crescents of stiff paper.

Many of the post-cards were left entire, but some containing all-over floral designs were cut into hearts and other forms.

"I've just thought of something else,"

announced Alma, suddenly. "I'll be back in a few minutes." Alma lived only next door. Returning, she brought a number of candy-boxes lined with the usual lace paper.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Beth, "we can work that in to great advantage."

Amanda was the first to finish a valentine, and, as she held it up for inspection, its genuine prettiness was an incentive to the other girls. I wish you might have seen some of the really beautiful conceits evolved by those enthusiastic workers.

Many of the valentines were in three sections, each section suspended by two ribbons. One specimen showed a heart of pink roses, suspended to which, by pink ribbons not too long, was a post-card in a horizontal position, depicting a scene,—not cut, but left entire,—while below that again swung a disc displaying a child's head.

Another one showed first of all a crescent of yellow flowers, its ends pointing upwards, while below was a disc showing a kitten's expressive face: a star of forget-me-nots was attached last.

The paper-lace edged more than one card, principally those that had not been cut. Perhaps one of the most effective designs was that exhibiting six attractive heads,—two representing children, two cats, and two heads of dogs. The cutting followed the outline carefully, each backed by gilt or red paper before cutting. A similar idea was carried out by laying three heads in a horizontal row upon a strip of ribbon, beneath which depended two heads, with a single head under the two, thus forming an inverted pyramid.

"And one beauty of our valentines," reminded Alma, "is that there's no wrong side to any of them. That was Beth's idea." As all the cards contained writing on one side, every heart, crescent, etc., was cut double and pasted together, after the ribbons or lace had been fastened on. And each valentine was suspended by ribbon tied in a pretty bow.

Only ordinary envelopes were required, as, when folded, each valentine occupied the space of an ordinary card. "Let's put an old stamp on each one to look more realistically important," suggested Beth, exhibiting the oft-handled valentine that primarily had been her mother's.

"And I thought it a marvel of beauty," laughed she, comparing it with the more elaborate creations of the afternoon.

From the matron of the South-western Home Beth had secured the name of every child, so the work of addressing was soon merrily in progress. As to which one should play postman—well, the idea was alluring to all, so it was decided that each girl should take her turn, and at the usual hours for delivery should leave a certain number of the mysterious envelopes. I must not forget to mention that each envelope displayed a seal on its back,—in most instances a heart cut from red paper.

"Delivering them at intervals," as Amanda observed, "will stimulate childish expectancy."

These winter nights, against my window-pane, Nature with busy pencil draws designs Of ferns and blossoms and fine spray of vines, Oak leaf and acorn and fantastic vines, Which she will make when summer comes again;

Quaint arabesques in argent, flat and cold, Like curious Chinese etchings.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

For The Beacon.

The Man Who Stayed.

BY CHARLES W. CASSON.

Out upon the broad Atlantic a storm was raging. For days the waves had been running mountain high. The wind blew with such force that it turned the peaks of the waves into blinding clouds of spray. For a week the sun had hidden its face, as though it did not wish to drop any of its precious sunshine into such a rough and boisterous world.

And in the midst of the storm, with the waves tossing it about like a chip, and the wind hurling itself through its rigging, was a ship. Every wave had helped to strain its timbers, and the dashing water had thrown itself time and again upon the heaving deck. Every now and then it went deep into the trough of the waves, and seemed as though it would never have the strength to rise again.

At last the storm became so bad that practically all hope was gone. It seemed sure death to remain on board. Water was coming fast into the ship, and the crew at the pumps did not seem to gain any headway on the intruding water. And, just when everything seemed at its worst, land was sighted not very far away.

Two men, hearing the cry of "Land, ho!" rushed to the side of the ship, and saw in the distance the land that stood safe and solid, away from the danger of the tossing sea. As you may imagine, both wished with all their might that they were standing upon it, instead of upon the sinking ship.

One man left the railing, and went down to his bunk. There he gathered together the things he most prized, and tied them into a small bundle. Coming on deck again, he fastened the bundle to his waist, and jumped into the sea, in order that he might reach the shore and safety. For a time he made some advance toward the distant land; but the waves were so great and the distance was so far that his strength failed him, and, when finally a huge billow flung him into a pit of water, he never rose out of it.

The other man, after looking with equal longing upon the distant safety of the land, turned his back upon it, and went once again to the pumps, to help save the ship and the rest of the crew. He decided to stay by the ship, and to cast his lot with the rest of the people who were in equal danger.

All through that fearful day they worked, and, when evening came, the storm began to cease. The waves gradually became smaller and the wind blew less fiercely. Slowly the pumps gained upon the water that came in below, and before another day dawned the ship was safe and the harbor was near by.

So the man who sought his own selfish safety by trying to swim to the shore, leaving his comrades to perish, lost his life. And the man who turned his back upon the selfish chance, and did what he could for others, helped to save all, and saved himself in the doing.

It was an illustration of what always happens. In the gospel according to Matthew you will find the same truth in the words, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

And, when you have grown a little older, and have joined the Young People's Religious Union, you will speak the same truth when you repeat the word:

"Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone.
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thine own."

Selfishness is just suicide. When we have learned that, we have learned the greatest lesson of life. In helping others we help ourselves: in saving others we save ourselves. To gain truest joy, we must give joy to as many as we can. There is no other way in which we can be happy in this new year of 1912.

Let us stay by the ship, and work for others, and give safety and happiness to all.

A "Band of Mercy" Hymn.

A brighter day is dawning—
Religion's holy light
Is pouring its effulgence
O'er Error's lengthened night;
Humanity's broad mantle
Falls tenderly on all
God's humbler, helpless creatures,
With love's embracing thrall.

The good man owns as kindred
All beings he may bless,
Defends them from injustice,
Is pained with their distress;
He feels that life is sacred
In man or beast or bird,
And that one God is Father
Of child and flock and herd.

O Brothers, let compassion
Our pledge and banner be;
Let sacred laws of kindness
Shield all from injury.
And Thou, O Father, help us
In deeds of love to live;
And to this Band of Mercy
Thy benediction give!

A. JUDSON RICH.

Recently a tender, gentle, refined woman who has identified herself with those movements which seek to improve the conditions of child life said: "I have had a new thought come to me that has made me accept the loss of my little girl with patience, almost with resignation. God never meant that a woman should be mother to just one little girl. He meant that every woman should be mother to every child in the world."

Could this impulse become the principle of every woman's life, the mission of the Babe of Bethlehem would be accomplished. The moan of injustice, the shriek of ignorance, the cry of sin, would be a call to a love which would inspire to activity the world's wisdom, the world's pity, the world's courage. Life would sweep on toward perfection, unhindered by blind selfishness, unmarred by lust, unshadowed by ignorance. The soul of love is illumination, its impulse inspiration, and these divine qualities are the sign and seal of motherhood. *The Outlook.*

I am happy in having learned to distinguish between ownership and possession. Books, pictures, and all the beauty of the world belong to those who love and understand them, not usually to those who possess them. All of these things that I am entitled to I have: I own them by divine right. So I care not a bit who possesses them. I used to care very much and consequently was very unhappy.

JAMES HOWARD KEHLER.

RECREATION CORNER.

ENIGMA XXXIII.

I am composed of 16 letters.
My 2, 5, 6, 7, is a welcome sight to the sailor.
My 11, 1, 2, 3, 14, is what the sailors dread.
My 9, 3, 5, 2, is genuine.
My 11, 9, 1, 6, 7, is something fine.
My 2, 8, 10, 7, 3, 9, one who goes before.
My 7, 12, 6, 11, 8, 9, is what we should avoid.
My 16, 15, 11, 16, 1, 11, is crooked.
My 13, 8, 4, determines gender.
My *whole* is the name of a noted scientist.

HELEN WILKINSON.

ENIGMA XXXIV.

I am composed of 15 letters.
My 2, 11, is a pronoun.
My 1, 5, 9, is a weight.
My 7, 3, 6, 7, is an examination.
My 10, 8, 12, 9, is a musical instrument.
My 4, 5, 14, 15, is to be forward.
My 13 is an article.
My *whole* is a daily newspaper.

MARJORIE BRENNAN.

A DICKENS STORY.

Fill the blanks with the name of one of the works of Charles Dickens.

Three of us —, myself, and —, a young fellow named —, went to the city with — of a good time. Our train was late, and while waiting we went to an —, hard by to get something to read. The clerk, a pleasing young girl, called familiarly —, showed us some books. I bought —. One of my friends purchased —, and the other —. The train came at last, and we were soon whirled into the city. We all found our pockets had been picked. — would have been our fate if I had not possessed a letter of credit. I presented this at the bank of —, and it was honored by the cashier, young —. When we had all seen the sights, we repaired to an inn styled —, kept by a gruff old man, —. He gave us a room where a — sang all night. Being an —, I could not rest, as I was accustomed to a quiet bed at home. So I did not close my eyes till the — from the neighboring steeples were playing a — on the morning air. Then the bellboy, — called me, and I began — all over again. *Selected.*

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 17.

ENIGMA XXX.—Robinson Crusoe.

ENIGMA XXXI.—Julia Ward Howe.

A PARTY OF T'S.—1. Individuality. 2. Insensibility. 3. Durability. 4. Liberality. 5. Virility. 6. Susceptibility. 7. Christianity. 8. Hilarity.

MIXED PROFESSIONS AND TRADES.—1. Astronomers. 2. Carpenters. 3. Merchants. 4. Stenographers. 5. Physicians. 6. Lawyers.

Answers to puzzles have been received from L. Kendall Davis, Augusta, Me.; Julius C. Sturm, Concord, N.H.; Gordon Atwood, Whitman, Mass.

THE BEACON.

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